

*Emily Baird**Hog Creek Review*

Unwanted Rebel

Growing up, my close family of five lived in a limited suburb located in Toledo, Ohio Branch Eddition. The restricted neighborhood located outside of Toledo's city limits received its misguided status that "only rich people lived there." In fact, on numerous occasions when I was younger, classmates would often question, "Are you rich?" after noticing the two story well landscaped brick home that bus one dropped me off at every day after school at 3:30 pm. Branch Eddition received its high status due to the extravagant homes and fancy playsets with tunnel slides in each backyard. On my street, Landon Drive, lived all of my very best friends, Zacharia and Mary Smith, Jennifer and Mika Morris, and Alexandria and Max Haskins. We would spend our days riding bikes together, playing tag, hide and seek, and eating gourmet popsicles from our garage freezers. We were together every day, and without even realizing, formed our own Landon Drive clique. Our overly comfortable lifestyle conforming to high standards and materialistic items was not admirable without a lower standard to confidently compare to. Retrospectively, such things should not have defined who Annabelle was, but in a world where your biggest concern is how long you can ride your bike with your friends, it is difficult to see past another's noticeable differences. Two blocks down, on Angela Drive, lived the weird, smelly girl, Annabelle Simmons. Annabelle rebelled against our lifestyle filled with expensive Razor electric scooters and Gap Kids apparel, and with no doubt was naturally classified as the outsider of the clique on Landon Drive.

Annabelle was short and fat, and wore basketball shorts and old wrinkly t-shirts that to me strangely smelled like my father's white work uniform when he returned home after a long day at Honda Transmission. She boldly displayed greasy matted hair and her family was extremely outlandish; her brother Stanley had a black scraggly beard, braces, played Yu-Gi-Oh, and was repeatedly termed Stuart Little, comically referring to the skimpy white mouse

from a familiar film our babysitters Courtney James and John Browner always played on Friday nights as our parents attended their monthly Jesters meetings, where Annabelle's parents John and Brenda surely would not fit in. Jesters was a group of adults that met monthly to arrange extravagant parties, and all of the Landon Drive children's parents attended. Families, not just the children, living on Landon Drive even conformed to a specific way of life. Our mothers were fit, tan housewives, and sipped on expensive wine together, while our fathers were buff, hardworking bread winners. Annabelle's overweight family rebelled from the typical lifestyle of a resident of Branch Eddition, as her father stayed home and her mother worked. Her mother did not sip on wine on our deck in the evenings with the other mothers, and her father being a stay at home father did not fill the role of what we accepted as a typical hardworking dad. In addition, Annabelle's parents wore outdated clothing, glasses with smudged lenses, and tall dingy white Starter socks. Annabelle's house was not nearly as flashy as the houses on Landon Drive, with her wired fence outlining the tall dog poop infested grass, and rusty cars sitting in her driveway. On top of all of this, Annabelle owned two hideous dogs who were beyond vicious, and hoarded hamsters in her two car garage whose smell made me gag, and word on the street was she peed in her pool! Once in a blue moon, Annabelle would whirl her Razor push scooter over to my house three minutes away, to which I would tell my parents, "Tell her I'm not home!" as I escaped to the safety of my pink Barbie filled room. When both my parents rudely refused to lie to Annabelle, I would fib, "I'm not allowed to play today," as I hastily locked the front door shut. Obviously, Annabelle and her strange family did not conform to the typical lifestyle expected out of a resident persisting in Branch Eddition, let alone the clique on Landon Drive. In our eyes, the Simmons' rebelled against the community we loved and conformed to, and in result of this, my friends and I did not want to be associated with their daughter in the slightest way. Annabelle was unequal and did not conform to the obvious guidelines of our clique; she was the outsider, or the other.

This degrading theme of shunning the unwanted outsider stands just as true ten years following in Toledo High School. Annabelle and her strange family definitely represent the

grungy, less appealing members of society. Many times, people like Annabelle are looked down upon from higher class people, like the “Landon Drive Clique.”

As unfortunate as it is, when one person or group of people believes another does not conform to their own idea of life, the one “rebellious” (Annabelle) is quickly ruled as an outsider. Because “the other” is of a lower lifestyle, one cannot swallow their pride and associate with them. This theme was proven growing up in Branch Eddition with Alexandria, Max, Mika, Zachariah, Mary, and Annabelle, and also remains accurate a decade later in my small town high school. In fact, I attended high school with Annabelle during my freshman year and her senior year. Surely, nothing had changed. Annabelle was still the smelly, fat, weird girl with greasy hair, and did not possess many friends. The limited number of friends Annabelle did associate with, however, fell under the same stereotype as she did. In Toledo High School, students very similar to Annabelle’s type were awarded the stereotype, “crum.” “Crum” was a term foolishly created in the halls of THS, which referred to anyone who displayed a dirty appearance, through greasy hair, unwashed clothes, yellow teeth, or someone who smelled up the entire classroom containing approximately thirty students of body odor. Annabelle was just as much an outsider at the age of eighteen as she was at the age of eight. Like our younger years, Annabelle rebelled against her true lifestyle by constantly reaching out to those living a lifestyle higher than her own. Annabelle did not realize how different she was from the “elite groups,” and was a four year member of the higher standard groups found in Toledo High School, such as the elite choir, known as chorale, and Top Twenty, a precisely chosen group of singers and dancers that demanded a great deal of financial responsibility to participate. These groups, much like Branch Eddition, or more specifically Landon Drive, held very high standards that Annabelle did not meet. Members of the Top Twenty and Chorale did not accept Annabelle because of her lower way of life, much like the kids growing up on Landon Drive ten years previously. However, for the first time in ten years, I realized that Annabelle’s greasy hair and extra weight did not matter. Annabelle threw them for a loop when she would attempt to fit in without likewise conforming to these standards.

The very idea of conformity and rebellion is not only targeted toward Annabelle, as the same idea was shown through her small group of friends. Annabelle's friends who conformed to her "crumpy" ways were also treated as outsiders much like Annabelle. By Annabelle's friends falling under the same category of the dirty, smelly, outsider, we can conclude that outside of Branch Eddition and the elite groups of Toledo High School that regardless of where you live or the groups you partake in, if you rebel against one's way of life, you are a form of rebellion, and an outsider. As Annabelle's friends Allie and Ian displayed the same dirty, "crumpy" characteristics, higher status people left them as outsiders. Higher status groups with flashier, cleaner expectations of life were not attracted to the style in which Annabelle, her family, and her two friends presented themselves, much like reactions of the "Landon Drive Clique" ten years before. However, for the first time in ten years, I realized that Annabelle's greasy hair and extra weight did not matter. Retrospectively, I was one of the few who realized that details that once seemed to completely define a person did not define them at all. In fact, I used Top Twenty to create a friendship with Annabelle. Through reaching out to Annabelle, the THS "crum," I rebelled against the crowd who thought they were better than Annabelle. I rebelled against the crowd that I was once part of.

Following Annabelle's role of a lifelong outsider through childhood, as well as her high school career, proves that one will only associate with others they feel match their standards. If one openly rebels against what is the social norm, they are an unwanted form of rebellion, and become an outsider. But more importantly, Annabelle proved to me that this theme does not matter. Behind Annabelle's standards was an outgoing, sarcastic, giggly girl who truly made an outstanding friend. Annabelle's simple lifestyle and "crummy" appearance did not match up with what the kids of Landon Drive were accustomed to: extravagant houses, normal parents, and fun siblings which had caused them to conform to Toledo High School's elite standards of Top Twenty or Chorale, and so many missed out on a great friendship. Annabelle rebelled against today's expectations of members of society. As we can surely conclude from Annabelle's role as an outsider, in order to be acceptable, one must follow social norms by being materialistic, present themselves in an attractive manner,

and live in high standard homes. For many, Annabelle was a form of rebellion against what society creates to be a normal way of living, not just what Max, Alexandria, Zachariah, Mary, Mika and I had grown to believe was normal and acceptable in our small suburb Branch Eddition. Because of what appeared to be rebellion against our lifestyle, we ruled Annabelle as the outsider. The same trend remains true for Annabelle outside the streets of Branch Eddition. When one appears to rebel against what another finds comfortable and the only way of life, one will in exchange turn away from the source that makes one feel uncomfortable, and due to Annabelle's unattractive appearance, wacky family, and weight issues, all social groups she attempted to associate with did exactly that. However, Annabelle was more than her circumstances and appearance; Annabelle was more than what the Landon Drive Clique and Toledo High School allowed her to be. It took me years to realize there is more to a person than their appearance, and just because someone is different than you does not make them wrong. In fact, looking back, the kids with the cool playsets, normal parents, and fancy houses, members of elite show choir groups, and "non-crummy" life styles should have been accepting of the weird, fat girl with hamsters living in her garage.